

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 CAB-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 AID-05

OMB-01 PM-03 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /089 W

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R 281447Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4141

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

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BRUSSELS FOR FAA

CASABLANCA FOR RCAA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR EAIR MR

SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN POSITION ON AIR AFRIQUE

REF: ABIDJAN 6166

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1. FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM AIR AFRIQUE SUMMIT IN ABIDJAN, PRESIDENT MOKTAR OULD DADDAAH COMMENTED TO PRESS THAT MEMBERS OF AIR AFRIQUE HAD ASKED PRESIDENT OF IVORY COAST TO MAKE CONTACT WITH SODETRAF, FRENCH COMPANY WHICH HOLDS SHARYE IN AIR AFRIQUE, WITH GOAL OF REPURCHASING THESE SHARES. QUESTIONED ABOUT SUMS OWED TO AIR AFRIQUE BY CERTAIN MEMBER COUNTRIES, OULD DADDAAH SAID HE HAD REQUESTED THAT ALL MEMBERS PAY UP THEIR ARREARS. HE ADDED THAT THESE MEMBERS ARE NOW IN PROCESS OF SO DOING.

2. KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICIAL IN MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND TRANSPORT COMMENTED TO EMBASSY OFFICER, BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, THAT SODETRAF HOLDS 34 PERCENT OF AIR AFRIQUE SHARES. FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, SODETRAF IS HOLDING COMPANY FOR UTA WHICH, IN EFFECT, CONTROLS AIR AFRIQUE. EACH OF ELEVEN AIR AFRIQUE MEMBERS HOLDS SIX PERCENT OF SHARES FOR TOTALNF 66 PERCENT. PROBLEM, OFFICIAL EXPLAINED, IS THAT ELEVEN MEMBERS SELDOM AGREE AND SODETRAF, READ UTA, MAKES DECISIONS BY DEFAULT. OFFICIAL IS CONVINCED THAT MOST OF IMPORTANT DECISIONS CONCERNING AIR AFRIQUE ARE MADE IN PARIS, NOT AT HEADQUARTERS IN ABIDJAN.

3. OFFICIAL SAID HE BELIEVES MAURITANIA HAS TWO BASIC GOALS FOR CHANGING AIR AFRIQUE: (A) TO MAKE AIRLINE MORE PUBLIC SERVICEMLRIENTED SO THAT IT DOES NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, TAKE A WEEK TO FLYLFROM DAKAR TO BANGUI. THIS MEANS, OF COURSE, THAT AIR AFRIQUE WILL HAVE TO BE LESS INTERESTED IN MAKING PROFIT AND EVEN PREPARED TO ABOSRB PERMANENT LOSS. OFFICIAL SAID THIS POLICY WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE AS LONG AS UTA, WHICH IS ONLY INTERESTED IN MAKING PROFIT, CONTROLS OPERATION FROM SIDELINES; AND (B) TO AFRICANIZE AIRLINE. THIS INVOLVES BOTH INCREASING AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT IN AIR AFRIQUE AND BREAKING UTA CONTROL. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL, LATTER IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN FORMER.

4. COMMENT: VIEWS OF MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TRANSPORT OFFICIAL ON NEED FOR PUBLIC SERVICE ORIENTATION OF AIR AFRIQUE COINCIDE CLOSELY WITH VIEWS OF OULD DADDAAH ON ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS) AS EXPRESSED RECENTLY TO CODEL DIGGS (NOUAKCHOTT 1389). OULD DADDAAH EMPHASIZED NEED FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND, PARTICULARLY, IMPROVEMENTS IN TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION LINKS AMONG STATES OF WEST AFRICA.HANDYSIDE

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